

Today's News - Wednesday, December 1, 2010

- A fascinating look at what works - and doesn't work - for Chinese architects who want to be a part of the country's massive building program: it's either "Architects fall at the bottom of the production line" or "Now architects are placed at the center stage."
- Glancey on the continuing tale of "Chinese doppelgangers" bidding for contracts in British firms' names.
- Byles reports from Germany's IBA 2010, and finds "a model for healthy urban futures by scaling down" that is "a portrait of urban resilience."
- HUD secretary explains how the U.S. plans to tackle sprawl, including a focus on green jobs, and supporting the designers that "are creators of green communities."
- Farrelly fulminates about "big, shiny-new" bank HQs going up in Sydney and Melbourne that may be "all super-glassy and schmick" (meaning stylish, we think), but "not one gives a flying fiscal fig for the public."
- Rochon gets a sneak-peek at MAD's Marilyn in Mississauga: "In a city with a reputation for building an unstoppable dull-scape," the development is creating "some serious architecture envy."
- Critics cry out against Hong Kong's \$200 million green jail: what about some healthy living policies for the city's seven million law-abiding residents?
- An impressive shortlist for the V&A extension; and Tate Britain to get a £45m much-needed makeover after being "too often overshadowed by its younger, brasher brother downriver."
- Bey on some plastic surgery planned for a Chicago building to make it "a sustainable - and snazzy - \$45 million medical museum."
- The Taiwan Tower competition winner is a doozy; now all the Romanian architect has to do is "actually build the thing."
- An eyeful of the finalists' "innovative and colorful" proposals in the ARC International Wildlife Crossing competition.
- Horton has a most interesting Q&A with Rybczynski re: just about everything (our fave: "landscape architects...can make very good planners, better than city planners, and much better than architects" - oh my).
- Really depressing news: Office d'A's Tehrani and Ponce de Leon "are at each other's throats over control of the company that brought them renown" (we said it was depressing).
- On a brighter note, EPA recognizes 5 projects with the 2010 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement.
- We couldn't resist: a French artist designs a fully functional boat to look as if it is sinking (no kidding - he's sailed it across the English Channel no less!).

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Think inside the box: China should be a place of dreams. Within the next 20 years...will build 50 mega-cities of 1 million people each... "It's passive planning handed down from the above" ... "People rarely get taken into account...often architects give in too soon" ... "Architects fall at the bottom of the production line" ... "Now architects are placed at the center stage. It's a big change." + Urban planning scandals -- Wu Xin/Studio+; Liu Heng/Node Studio; Li Hu/Open Architecture; Steven Holl; Liu Yuguang/Li Gan/Beijing Institute of Architectural Design- Global Times (China)

British architects at the mercy of China's copycats: Established UK firms are now facing a novel challenge: Chinese doppelgangers bidding for contracts in their names...moves beyond flattery into criminality. It's one thing to see your latest work copied, but to have a fake firm snapping up contracts in your name is another thing altogether. By Jonathan Glancey -- Broadway Malyan; Aedas - Guardian (UK)

Comment: IBA 2010: The Future Shrinks: Germany's legendary building program finds a model for healthy urban futures by scaling down...a portrait of urban resilience made possible by an emerging toolkit of tactics...coupled with economic development strategies...reinvention of Saxony-Anhalt...open-ended approach to urban reinvention offers a courageous, even uncharted path toward the city of the future. By Jeff Byles [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan on Fighting Sprawl: ...explained U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's green programs...making energy efficiency retrofits easier, and promoted the Obama administration's efforts to fight sprawl and encourage sustainable communities...U.S. must focus on green jobs, and supporting the designers that "are creators of green communities." - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Who are banks trying to impress? It's certainly not their customers: ...same attitude...informs those few, rubbish buildings the banks do still build...big, shiny-new NAB and ANZ buildings in Melbourne Docklands...Westpac and Commonwealth buildings in Sydney docklands. All are HQs, all super-glassy and schmick...All are from intelligent, highly regarded architects. All have won (or will win) multiple awards. But not one gives a flying fiscal fig for the public. By Elizabeth Farrelly -- BVN Architecture; Hassell; JPW/Johnson Pilton Walker; FJMT/Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp- Sydney Morning Herald

Like Marilyn herself, the Absolute Tower is smart, sexy, built to impress: A she-building, with curves of glass...Architecture lives in Mississauga. At long last. In a city with a reputation for building an unstoppable dull-scape, the 56-storey condominium development has created some serious architecture envy...banality has been trumped by a tribute to the female form. By Lisa Rochon -- Ma Yansong/MAD Architects; Burka Varacalli Architects [images]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Hong Kong's first green jail sparks controversy: ...\$200 million Lo Wu Correctional Institution...aims to provide more humane living conditions for some 1,400 female inmates...has raised eyebrows after winning a green building award...with critics saying the government is not doing enough to promote similar healthy living for many of the city's seven million people. -- Hong Kong Architectural Services - China Post

V&A extension shortlist: Seven vying to design museum's new Exhibition Road development in South Kensington -- Tony Fretton; Jamie Fobert; Heneghan Peng; Snøhetta/Gareth Hoskins; Jun Aoki & Associates; Michael Maltzan- BD/Building Design (UK)

Tate Britain To Get £45m Makeover: Too often overshadowed by its younger, brasher brother downriver, Tate Britain is finally getting some pecuniary TLC -- Caruso St John [images]- Londonist (UK)

Plastic surgery for the old Rock Records building: Will structure become a sustainable - and snazzy - \$45 million medical museum? The Buonacorsi Foundation and the newly-created National Museum of Health + Medicine Chicago... By Lee Bey -- Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture [images]- WBEZ Chicago Public Radio

A skyscraper like no other: Taiwan to build 390-meter tower with floating observatory blimps: "Floating Observatories" is Dorin Stefan's winning entry in the recent Taiwan Tower Conceptual International Competition -- and in return for his US\$130,000 first prize, now he has to actually build the thing. -- D.S.B.A/Dorin Stefan Birou Arhitectura [imges, links]- Gizmag (Australia)

Five Better Ways To Help Bears, Bobcats And Lynx Cross A Colorado Highway: Innovative and colorful strategies for protecting wildlife on a treacherous mountain pass near Vail...ARC International Wildlife Crossing Infrastructure Design Competition...finalists' proposals use a number of inventive concepts... -- Balmori Associates/with StudioMDA; Olin Studio/Explorations Architecture; Janet Rosenberg/Blackwell Bowick Partnership; Michael Van Valkenburgh/HNTB; Zwarts & Jantsma Architects/OKRA Landscape Architects [slide show, links]- New West (Montana)

Witold Rybczynski's Compelling Makeshift World: ...his interest in cities and architecture, his role as a critic, and his new

book "Makeshift Metropolis"... "landscape architects, by training and temperament..can make very good planners, better than city planners, and much better than architects. Putting landscape architects in a lead position on teams entrusted with planning new parts of our cities, whether or not they include parks, would be a good first step." By Guy Horton- Huffington Post

Design for acrimony: They have been partners for almost 20 years in the award-winning Boston architectural firm Office dA, called one of the nation's most innovative design practices...But now, Nader Tehrani and Monica Ponce de Leon are at each other's throats over control of the company that brought them renown. - Boston Globe

EPA recognizes 5 projects with the 2010 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement for their comprehensive approach to improving quality of life...Smart.Growth@NYC/PlaNYC; Miller's Court, Baltimore; Making the Greatest Place, Portland, OR; Gateway 1 Corridor Action Plan, Maine; Mint Plaza, San Francisco -- Marks, Thomas Architects; CMG Landscape Architects; Sherwood Design Engineers [images, links]- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Part artwork, part boat... literally! French artist Julien Berthier has designed a fully functional boat to look as if it is sinking. [images, video]- Gizmag (Australia)

Putting Colors Together: An Interview with Will Alsop: For Alsop, it is the act of painting, the state of losing control - its imprecision and intuitiveness - that best define his initial vague intentions - and what ultimately brings him close to the mystery of inventing new architecture. By Vladimir Belogolovsky- ArchNewsNow



-- Saunders Architecture: Fogo Island Artist Studios, Fogo Island, Newfoundland, Canada

-- Zaha Hadid Architects: Evelyn Grace Academy, London, UK

-- Book: DINKA: Legendary Cattle Keepers of Sudan, By Angela Fisher & Carol Beckwith

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